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ART. X. — *Histoire Philosophique du Regne de Louis XV.* Par le COMPTE DE TOCQUEVILLE. Paris: D'Amyot. 1847. 2 vols. 8vo.

THE Count de Tocqueville is, we believe, the father of M. de Tocqueville, the distinguished writer on Democracy in America, and recently the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the French Republic. We learn from the preface to this history, that it is written by one in the decline of life, whose sympathies are with the principles and institutions of a former age, with an order of things that has almost wholly passed away. The history itself is an epitaph engraved on the tomb of monarchy in France, — an epitaph written, not indeed to eulogize the departed, but to point out the errors and the crimes which dimmed the glory of royalty, and finally brought down its grandeur and power to the dust. The author has evidently formed his style and sentiments upon those of Tacitus, and labors effectually to give a gloomy and tragic interest to his narrative. He is a Christian moralist, and his task is to describe sin and its consequences. He deplores the fall of the monarchy, but he shows that it was the inevitable result of the dissoluteness, corruption, and impiety, the wasteful and inglorious character of the reign of Louis XV. The results were slow in unfolding themselves; but few of them were visible during the lifetime of the depraved monarch. Still there was a general foreboding that such a state of things could not last, that a crisis was at hand, when so rotten a social edifice could no longer sustain itself, but with a fearful crash would plunge into ruin. It is reported that Louis himself said, "this thing will last as long as I shall; my successor may get out of it as he can." He did "get out of it" by the way of the scaffold. Voltaire was still more explicit: — "All around me, they are sowing the seeds of a revolution, which will inevitably happen, though I shall not have the pleasure of beholding it. The French are late in coming to their object, but they arrive at last. The light has gradually diffused itself so far, that an explosion will take place on the first opportunity, and then there will be a fine hubbub. The young folks are lucky; they will see great things." The

remark was characteristic ; the old mocking infidel hugs himself at the prospect of the completion of his work. The National Convention did well to install his image with all the honors in their pantheon, just as they were beginning the excesses of the Reign of Terror.

The Count de Tocqueville calls his work a philosophical history, as his object is to trace the connection of cause and effect between the errors and the crimes of the period which he describes, and the fearful scenes of the revolution which followed it. He reflects the light of subsequent events upon the reign of Louis XV., and thus determines its true character and influence. The contemporary historian is a mere chronicler, who can only describe scenes and narrate events, without any clear perception of their consequences. Posterity alone can read the whole lesson, for in their eyes alone the tree is known by its fruits. This is the true idea of the philosophy of history,—to develop the consequences of actions, and to point out the bearings of events upon each other ; for in this manner, the great laws of political economy and morality are shown to be exemplified in history, and the ways of God with man are justified.

There is a spurious philosophy of the subject, much in vogue with historians of the present day, which is a mere development of the doctrine of fatalism ; it teaches, that men are not responsible for their conduct, as they act only under an overruling necessity, which controls the whole course of events, the human agents in them being merely unconscious puppets, and the issues of things being determined by fate without regard either to their strivings, their merits, or their crimes. Philosophers of this school waste no words upon the moral character of the events which they narrate ; they survey with equal composure the unmerited sufferings of a Louis XVI., and the crimes of his murderers. The actors in history are estimated by the quantity, not the quality, of the effects produced by them ; the power which they exercised, instead of the moral or immoral use which they made of it, is the standard by which they are judged. Viewed in this manner, Mirabeau towers over Lafayette, and Bailly appears insignificant by the side of Danton. Carlyle is almost the only English historian of this class ; while Thiers, Michelet, Mignet, Lamartine, and a host of others, are its representatives

in France. Picturesque narrative, exaggerated description, startling contrasts, and a pointed and epigrammatic style are the qualities upon which such writers depend for success. They aim only at immediate effect, and care nothing about tracing actions to their causes and consequences, if they can only hurry the reader away by the brilliancy of their coloring, and by the absorbing interest of their narrative. History is thus degraded to a level with fiction ; it ceases to instruct, and labors only to astonish or amuse. It borrows the vivid colors of romance, and the imagination is invoked to supply the deficiencies of the story, and to fill up the picture. By thus gradually losing a strict regard for truth, it ceases to be trustworthy as a whole, and no longer affords even the materials for instruction. Lamartine's *History of the Girondists*, apart from its moral taint, its affected and sentimental style, and its utter disregard of the requisitions of humanity and justice, is a mere historical romance ; minute particulars and long conversations are reported in it which could not by any possibility have come to the knowledge of the narrator. No authorities are cited, and no credit can be given to the writer's blank assertion, that he has had access to unpublished documents and original sources of information, of which he may perhaps give some account at a future day. We cannot allow the evidence of historical events to depend upon M. Lamartine's reputation for carefulness and veracity. We seek more direct testimony, more definite citations of proof.

The shortest method of characterizing the Count de Tocqueville's work is to say, that in style and sentiment, in the opinions avowed, and the mode of narrating the facts, in all the essential qualities of a history, it is the very opposite of the class of books just described. It is addressed to a different class of readers ; it is an appeal to the thoughtful, cultivated, and religious student of human affairs ; to the philosophical statesman and the earnest and patient seeker after truth. He has none of the artifices of style, the affected smartness and exaggerated manner, or the appeals to national vanity and the flattery of popular prejudices, by which such writers as Michelet and Lamartine have sought to gain the applause of the multitude. His manner is rather formed upon that of Tacitus and Montesquieu ; it is concise, sententious, sometimes abrupt, and shows more of the spirit of the philosophical moralist

than of the suitor for popular favor. Far from pandering to the diseased appetite for national glory, which is the most salient trait of French character, he labors to reprove and subdue it, by exhibiting the decline of monarchy in France as leading to the extinction of the political influence of the country and the loss of its power and renown. In his eyes, the glory of France culminated under Louis XIV., and then passed rapidly through all the stages of decay, till it was lost in the horrors of the first Revolution. The saturnalia which then prevailed, the destruction of the monarchy, the nobility, and the church, and the triumph of irreligion and Jacobinism, was the just punishment of the disorders and wickedness of the court and the people under Louis XV. This is the grand but gloomy moral of his work, which the writer inculcates with the fervid indignation of an ancient prophet. He appears sincerely attached to the Roman Catholic church and to the cause of royalty; and he regards the decayed condition of religion in France and the extinction of the sentiment of loyalty as the greatest misfortunes which could befall his countrymen. He engages in no labored defence of his opinions against the democratic spirit of his age; he merely narrates the facts from his own point of view, and leaves it for others to view them under a different aspect, if they can. The lesson that he draws from them is a stern and sad one, like that which was uttered by the miserable Phlegyas from the darkness of his place of punishment: —

“Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere divos.”

It is a little singular that, while the son has gained so much distinction as the philosophical observer and analyst of the spirit of democracy and the progress of democratic institutions, the father should have occupied himself with tracing the last lines of the history of royalty, and expounding the causes of its decay. Both are men of marked abilities and cultivated tastes; they are quick and accurate observers, and their speculations are both original and profound. Their writings are addressed to thinkers, and are not designed to please the multitude. They come nearer to the English than to the French school of philosophy; though the son shows something of the fondness for rapid and sweeping generalizations which has usually characterized the speculations of his

countrymen. But neither of them indulges in the vague and sentimental declamations, the tinsel ornaments, the appeals to popular prejudices, and the shallow profundity of such writers as Lamartine and Cousin. With them, rhetoric never assumes the place of logic, and their weight of thought seeks no aid from brilliancy of expression. If affectation is ever visible in their writings, it is when they attempt to philosophize on too slight occasions, and seek to render some very profound reason for that the cause of which lies upon the surface. The son, we believe, has never attempted to write history; and the father certainly does not excel as a narrator of events or a delineator of characters, though he gives a very clear, neat, and concise summary of facts, and arranges his materials with admirable method. His work will be a classic in French history long after the more showy productions of many of his contemporaries are forgotten.

We give an extract from the preface, that shows with great clearness the purpose which the writer has had in view, and the general character of his work.

“When the tomb received the remains of Louis XV., the old French monarchy was interred in it along with him. The acts of this king, his faults and his vices, gave a great impulse to the movement which was urging the nation forward to a new order of things. The principles both of religious belief and political opinion underwent a severe investigation; and when, guided by false lights, men strove eagerly to annihilate all religious faith, did they not thereby exalt human pride beyond all limit?

“The philosophical inquiry into the causes, which, during a great part of the eighteenth century, prepared the minds of people for the great revolution which marked the end of it, is worthy of our serious attention. I have undertaken it with the more ardor, because it appears to me that hitherto it has been hardly commenced. In order to understand the origin of the prodigious changes which have taken place in our day, it is a useful, I may say almost a necessary, condition to have seen something of the old *régime*, and thus to be able to compare the causes with the effects which they have produced. After a revolution which has reversed so many fortunes, and kindled so many passions, old age is not a bad period in which to write the history of the times that are not yet remote from our own; the years, as they accumulate, complete our knowledge of the human heart. Having become a stranger to the affairs that agitate the world, the writer looks upon them dispassionately; the rude shock of events has

worn away his prejudices; and in taking the pen, he has no other attraction than the truth, no other object than to instruct mankind.

"The book which I offer to the public is not a metaphysical work. In it the facts are narrated in detail; but I have endeavored to group them in such a manner that their consequences may be very obvious."

Monarchy never seemed more firmly established than it was in France at the death of Louis XIV. In spite of the reverses which clouded the later days of the Great Monarch's career, the people had been dazzled by the factitious splendors of his reign, and by his absorption of all the powers of government into himself. He had scattered all obstacles to the unlimited domination of the crown; he had exiled the Huguenots, had forced the great nobles to become supple courtiers, had compelled the parliaments to be merely the declaratory organs of his will and pleasure, and had caused nearly every country in Europe to tremble at the success of his arms. His noted boast, *l'état, c'est moi*, was a truth which his people were as proud to acknowledge, as he was to utter; they had learned to identify the national glory with the absolute dominion and personal renown of the king. They were as proud of the despotism of the monarch as the English were of the freedom of the people. Louis XIV. had given unity to the kingdom of France, and had gilded it over with foreign conquests and alliances, with the glory of letters and the arts, and with every form and attribute of splendor at home. The national vanity was satisfied, and the French people have never asked for any thing more.

Unfortunately, the crown passed from the head of Louis to that of an infant; and the dying monarch himself, as if a long minority were not fraught with hazards enough for royalty, increased the danger by attempting to extend his power beyond the limits of his own life, and to regulate the manner in which France should be governed till his great grandson should come of age. His will directed that a council of regency should be established, of which the Duke of Orleans should be the head, though he should have but one vote in it, and of which two of his natural children, whom he had legitimated, were to be members. This delegation of royal power to a numerous committee, instead of an individual, would

have been fatal to the promptness and energy of the government, and was consequently so unpopular, that the Duke of Orleans easily persuaded the parliament to set the will aside, and to appoint him sole regent. This step was perhaps necessary for the tranquillity of the kingdom; but it had the effect to persuade the people, that there existed in the state a power which was above the throne, and which had authority to annul the expressed wish of the king. It was so far unfavorable to royalty. It had a similar, though not an equal, effect with the act of the British parliament which, after the revolution of 1688, altered the succession to the throne.

The Regent Duke of Orleans was an abler statesman than Charles II. of England, whom in other respects he greatly resembled. He was a good-natured, indolent debauchee, riotous and extravagant in his pleasures, but having sense enough to prevent his boon companions and his mistresses from exercising any influence over him in matters of state. He was attached to peace, because he dreaded the troubles and expenses of a war; he loved to see France quiet and prosperous, both because he was naturally amiable and kind-hearted, and because the tranquillity of the kingdom allowed him more leisure for his private amusements. But he was careless and prodigal, and his facile disposition yielded to the importunity of suitors what his better judgment denied. The finances consequently fell into great disorder, and as the Regent had an inquiring and speculative turn of mind, and was fond of experiments, chemistry or alchemy being one of his private amusements, he naturally lent a ready ear to the wild financial projects of John Law.

This was the age of commercial bubbles and stockjobbing; the temporary success of the Mississippi scheme in France favored the inflation of the South Sea bubble in England, and the explosion which soon followed spread almost universal bankruptcy through the two kingdoms, and ruined the reputations as well as the fortunes of many of their leading statesmen and nobles. And the governments did not escape; the impoverished and exasperated people imputed all the blame to their rulers, who, in truth, had only shared the delusion with themselves. The practical talents and financial sagacity of Sir Robert Walpole broke the force of the blow in England; warned by him, the ministry did not get

deeply implicated in the affair, and the Bank of England stood entirely aloof. But in France, Law's schemes were adopted at an early day by the Regent, and the whole force of the government was exerted to carry them through. The sufferers, consequently, had a right to impute their ruin in some degree to the state, and to look to it for indemnification and for the punishment of the guilty. The Duke was both too good-natured and too just to punish when he had himself been an accomplice in the crime, if it was one ; for the more lenient will call it nothing but insanity. He protected Law, or allowed him to escape, and bore with his usual thoughtless indifference the reproaches which were showered upon his administration. The lustre of the crown which he represented had been stained by his meddling at all in such transactions ; and after the bubble burst, his refusal or inability to relieve the sufferers covered it with ignominy. The thirst for gain, when it rises to fever height, levels all distinctions of rank ; during the prevalence of the mania, princes of the blood, nobles, ladies of rank, ministers of state and the church, had mingled with the crowd in the Rue Quincampoix, and chattered eagerly with stockjobbers and swindlers. The material advantages of wealth came to be prized more highly than the factitious differences resting on prescription, or created by the favor of the crown. Hereditary rank and inherited honors lost ground in public estimation ; opulent bankers began to vie with the proudest nobles, not only in the sumptuousness of their style of living, but in direct influence at court. As the power of the aristocracy declined, that of the crown, which was dependent upon it, was also diminished ; the people ceased to respect their rulers, and the *prestige* of the monarchy in their eyes was gradually effaced.

The gross and dissolute conduct of the Regent and his court, moreover, did much to wean the affections of the nation from the constituted authorities of the state, and to prepare the way for the fall of royalty. Every form of vice and impiety was practised by them without restraint and without concealment. The libertinism of Louis XIV. and his courtiers was veiled by the strictness of etiquette and by a decent regard for the forms of morality and religion, even after their spirit had departed. Under this covering, it might truly be said that "vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its gross-

ness." The Duke of Orleans rudely tore down this veil, for he was by nature no hypocrite, and his frank and affable disposition was impatient of the restraints of etiquette. He threw open to the public gaze the penetralia of royalty, and exposed every act of debauchery and excess by which they were profaned. The gross and shameless violation of all the laws of morals and decency soon created weariness and disgust; ordinary pleasures, common vices, ceased to allure or to charm, and the means of stimulating the jaded appetites were eagerly sought in the refinements and extravagancies of debauch. Those who had ceased to respect themselves had no fear of the judgment of others, and the publicity of their wickedness increased their enjoyment of it, and inspired them with an ambition to startle the multitude by fresh enormities. The orgies of the Regent and his low companions, his mistresses and his daughters, were so frequent and shameless that men ceased to wonder at them; and the habit of regarding vice with callous indifference was soon established even among those whose temperaments did not incline to licentiousness, or who were shielded by avarice or ambition from other and more degrading vices. As is usual when the debasing influences proceed from a licentious court, the upper classes of society were the first corrupted; the middle ranks as yet preserved their purity of life, and therefore could not fail to regard with disgust and abhorrence the practices of their superiors.

Foremost in these licentious courses and most abandoned in his profligacy was the instructor and prime minister of the Regent, the infamous Cardinal Dubois. This wretch, of low origin, being the son of a poor apothecary, was endowed with consummate tact, activity, shrewdness, and matchless effrontery. Hypocrisy was the only vice that could not be imputed to him; he paraded the scandals of his life with as much pride as other men show in displaying their virtues. Having first corrupted the mind of his princely pupil by instruction in every species of wickedness, and made himself necessary to him both in the conduct of state affairs and in the procurement of pleasures, he demanded as the price of his services to be elevated to the highest honors of the church. While he had yet a wife, before he had taken priest's orders, or made any effort to conceal the turpitude of his life, he was nomi-

nated by his shameless master to be the successor of the saintly Fenelon in the archbishopric of Cambrai. This was an insult to religion, and the archbishop of Paris, resenting it as such, nobly refused to consecrate him. More supple bishops, among whom we grieve to find the illustrious Massillon, were persuaded to assist at the ceremony ; and the newly constituted archbishop immediately began his intrigues to obtain a cardinal's hat. The diplomacy of France, as he was now minister of foreign affairs, was conducted by him for some years solely with a view to this end ; and he at length succeeded, though the life of Pope Innocent III. is said to have been shortened by the remorse which he felt for having elevated Dubois to this dignity. But the French clergy were not ashamed to prostrate themselves before the new cardinal, who was now prime minister of the kingdom. In one of their assemblies, which took place in 1723, he was unanimously chosen their president ; and thus the "severity of Christianity bowed down before the splendor of the dignities with which successful vice had clothed itself." Religion itself received a fatal blow through the dishonor of its ministers ; and the people were encouraged to doubt or despise all that they had hitherto held most sacred.

The opportunity being so favorable, the champions of infidelity began to distinguish themselves by the boldness and rancor with which they assailed the faith of the common people. Their doctrines were no longer insinuated with some reserve, but were openly avowed, and defended with all the arms of sophistry and ridicule. Impiety became the fashion ; it was vulgar to preserve any respect either for morality or Christianity. To undermine the doctrines of natural religion and to mock at revelation was the shortest and easiest mode of obtaining the appellation of a philosopher. But the glory of emancipating one's own mind from the prejudices of the age would be imperfect if the freedom were not shared with others, as the teacher's fame is often measured by the number of his disciples. Hence the free thinkers and free livers showed themselves as eager to make proselytes to their opinions, and converts to their mode of life, as if they had been partisans of opposing sects in religion. The clergy, who should have resisted their attacks, were wholly occupied with the miserable disputes between the Jesuits and the Jansenists,

a controversy which paralyzed the efforts of Catholicism in France for more than a century. The powers of the civil magistrate, the terrors of the law, were directed rather against heretics than unbelievers; the writings of Voltaire and the earlier productions of Montesquieu remained unanswered, while the press teemed with confutations of Arnaud and Quesnel. Cardinal Noailles was persecuted, while Cardinal Dubois held the highest office in the kingdom.

The Regency foreshadowed the character of the reign which it introduced; it was the evening that ushered in the night. Louis XV. had all the faults of the Duke of Orleans without any of his virtues. He was an indolent, feeble, and selfish voluptuary, without energy enough to become a tyrant, and without the firmness of purpose and belief which is the only redeeming quality of the bigot. His vices were of that mean and scandalous character on which indignation seems wasted; the meanest of his subjects could only despise them. No thought for the honor of his throne or the happiness of his people seems ever to have disturbed him in the midst of his debaucheries. He was incapable of real attachment even to the companions and ministers of his pleasures; he tolerated them only because they catered skilfully to his appetites, and surrendered into their hands the reins of government only because he had not spirit and energy enough to retain them in his own grasp. His listless temperament and feeble intellect sought nothing but repose and sensual gratification. During the whole of his long reign, the destinies of France were swayed entirely by the abandoned females who were successively raised to the post of the king's mistress. Most of these women came from so low a condition in life, that they did not represent any party or interest in the state, and never became connected with one; their influence, consequently, was not exerted with a steady purpose of raising or depressing one of the dominant factions at court, or of favoring one line of policy in preference to another. It was directed exclusively by the caprice of the moment, a view to the favorite's immediate advantage, or by her personal preferences or dislikes. The king disappeared behind his mistress. The history of Louis XV. is a history of the successive reigns of Madame de Mailly, the Duchess de Châteauroux, Madame de Pompadour, and Madame du Barri.

An administration so conducted could not but be productive of tumult and disorder at home, and of defeat and disgrace in its foreign relations. The policy of the Regent, as we have seen, had been pacific; a cordial understanding existed between him and the English ministry, represented successively by Stanhope and Walpole, both of whom were eager to preserve peace in Europe, as the surest means of strengthening the house of Hanover in its yet insecure possession of the British throne. A short and unnatural war with Spain, that grew out of the frantic projects of Alberoni and the foolish conspiracy of Cellamare, was the only contest in which France was engaged under the Duke of Orleans. The influence of Fleury, bishop of Fréjus, then became predominant in the kingdom, and fortunately he was like his predecessor in the love of peace. He had been the king's tutor during the minority, and was accused of favoring the natural timidity, irresolution, and indolence of Louis, in order to keep him in a state of perpetual tutelage. However this may be, the king seemed to think it was quite right that his sagacious old instructor should become his first minister, and in fact should govern France without interference or control for the remainder of his life, which was prolonged far beyond the period usually allotted to man. He made a wise and temperate use of his power, almost the only charges brought against him being the artifices through which he acquired and retained his station. Thus, he chose a mistress for the king with the same coolness with which he had just before selected a wife for him, his only object being to find one whose gentle and unambitious character promised to give no trouble to the administration. Maria Leczinska was a mild and uncomplaining wife, and Madame de Mailly, the king's first mistress, was probably the only one who loved him for his own sake, and was content to share his affection without grasping at his power. Fleury was prudent, shrewd, simple in his tastes, and economical in the management of the finances; and his administration, on the whole, was the most prosperous portion of his sovereign's reign. But he had no generous impulses, no regard for the honor of the king, or the glory of the kingdom. He did nothing to retrieve the reputation of the monarchy, which had been tarnished by the excesses of the Regency and by the virtual bankruptcy of the government. Despising

all pomp and show for himself, he forgot to secure the affections of his countrymen through their vanity by increasing the magnificence of the court, adding to the personal reputation of the king, or pursuing a brilliant and aggressive foreign policy. He was pleased rather to reduce monarch and courtiers, generals and statesmen, into comparative insignificance by the side of his own quiet and unobtrusive, but all-including and resistless influence. At the age of eighty-seven, to prevent his star from being eclipsed by the rising popularity of the brothers Belle-Isle, whose rash but chivalrous schemes had awakened the martial spirit of France, he allowed his country to be drawn into the unnecessary and disastrous war of the Austrian Succession; and three years afterwards, he died, chief minister to the last, as he had wished, but leaving the kingdom with disordered finances, defeated armies, and a feeble and debauched sovereign, tottering upon the brink of the precipice over which it was soon to fall.

Soon after the death of Fleury, Madame de Pompadour became in fact prime minister of France; wars were made, generals and ambassadors appointed, and treaties signed, only to gratify her jealousy and caprice. Even the haughty Maria Theresa, at other times so punctilious in her notions of female propriety and imperial etiquette, stooped to write letters with her own hand to this worthless courtesan, in which she addressed her as "my sister." And the other powers of Europe soon came to understand that, in negotiating with France, every thing might be gained by acquiring the goodwill of the reigning favorite. The king's subjects were doubly mortified by the loss of all the advantages which had fairly been won for them through the splendid military talents of Marshal Saxe, and by the ignominy which covered the private character of Louis. The peace of Aix la Chapelle was in every respect inglorious for the French; having engaged in the war without any motive of sound policy, they came out of it with the loss of national honor, as they were compelled by the secret articles to destroy the fortifications of Dunkirk, and to banish the Pretender from their territory, to which he had been welcomed by the magnanimity of Louis XIV. They came out of it, also, with burdened finances, a ruined navy, and an enfeebled and dispirited population. One other such war, it was apparent, would destroy whatever

influence France might yet possess among the powers of Europe; and unfortunately another was near at hand, the Seven Years' war, the most disastrous and humiliating contest in which the country was ever engaged. The degrading concessions which were made at the close of it destroyed the last hold which royalty had over the affections of the people.

"A desire for liberty began to get possession of the minds of men. The French with difficulty adapt themselves to free institutions, but they will not long endure despotism, especially when it is not attended by national glory. The royal authority had been surrounded with splendor, under Louis XIV.; the people saw the whole state concentrated in the king, who gave to it magnificence and renown. But under Louis XV., arbitrary power showed symptoms of decline; and when the English form of government was compared with our own, the advantages of the former excited a sort of passionate admiration.

"The state of society in France already announced that the crisis would be a violent one. A perfect contrast existed between the two extremes of this society. At the summit was civilization carried to excess, and the improvidence and effeminacy which are the necessary consequences of such excess; at the bottom was barbarism and its fierce instincts; and barbarians have always conquered nations that were worn out and enervated by excessive civilization.

"One other cause of dissolution was added to that which we have just described. The vast conspiracy against Christianity, of which Voltaire was the chief, acquired fresh strength every day. Men who pretended to be reformers of the human race called themselves *philosophers*,—that is, lovers of wisdom, foes to prejudices. These men are constantly repeating the words of humanity and philanthropy; they wish, they say, to elevate the dignity of human nature, and to this end they substitute arbitrary and conventional virtues for Christian duties. They preach up toleration, and soon become themselves intolerant. Misfortune excites their pity; they will even undertake its defence, if they should be able by so doing to create an excitement and to acquire celebrity; for thus they obtain a great influence. *Philosophy* is a word continually in their mouths and in their writings; for to philosophize is to brave received opinions, and to crush them, if possible, under the weight of public contempt; it is also to attack fanaticism, the assailants of which do not perceive that the fury which is directed against religion becomes itself a species of fanaticism."

Our author distinguishes four different forms or types of

infidelity, which prevailed during the period to which his book relates. The first was the licentious impiety, founded upon the general corruption of morals which existed under the Regency; the second was the mocking and scoffing spirit that was introduced by Voltaire; the third was the sentimental deism of Rousseau; and the last was the fierce and sanguinary impiety, which prevailed at the first establishment of a French republic. The Count de Tocqueville has supplied some valuable materials for the history of these several forms of unbelief, and has speculated with much acumen upon their causes and consequences. We cannot follow him through the whole of this discussion, but we translate his lucid and concise account of the effect of Rousseau's writings upon the religious and political opinions of his contemporaries.

"The philosophers had injured their own cause by their universal skepticism, by outraging the inmost and surest convictions of the soul through their denial even of the being of a God and the reality of a conscience. Rousseau came to their support by advocating the spiritualism which Diderot and his school, Helvetius, and sometimes Voltaire himself, had affected to despise. As Voltaire had succeeded in rendering religion ridiculous, any belief in it was out of the question; but materialism was repugnant to the understandings of men, and so a compromise was made on the ground of the spiritualism of Rousseau. He admitted a belief in God, conscience, the immortality of the soul, and natural religion, but rejected all positive doctrines, all worship, all observances. The *Emile* was published in 1759. This book was in itself a revolution. In it, all the usages of society were attacked by paradoxes, but with that ravishing eloquence which has placed the author at the head of the writers of the eighteenth century. He taught fathers of families that they ought not to speak of religion to their children till they had reached that age when the passions begin to render its yoke a heavy one. He puts into the mouth of a priest the noblest eulogy upon the Gospel; and a few lines farther down, he states the most captious arguments against the doctrines of the religion of Jesus Christ. This tissue of sophistries and contradictions had the honor of being burnt by the hand of the executioner, — a condemnation rather useful than injurious to the success of the work. Who could suppose that the barbarous spite evinced by this sentence would cause the eloquent pages of Rousseau to create nothing but disgust?

"In 1762, the *Social Contract* was published, in which Rousseau compares all religions with each other, and gives polytheism

the preference over catholicism. The latter is incompatible, as he thinks, with the unity which is essential to every form of government. But he becomes ashamed of this doctrine, and returns from it to natural religion, which he covers up with the name of the Gospel. 'Religion,' he says, 'considered in relation to society, may also be divided into two kinds; namely, the religion of the man and that of the citizen; the former, without temples, without altars, without rites, confined altogether to internal worship of the Supreme Being and to the eternal duties of morality, is the pure and holy religion of the Gospel.'

"But what he says upon this subject is only the complement of his political system, which was the boldest that had yet been developed. In the *Émile*, he had already proclaimed the uselessness of kings, and combated the institution of privileged classes. 'Remember that the human race is essentially composed of bodies of private individuals; and even if all the kings should be taken away, the loss would not be a sensible one, and things would go on just as well as ever. . . . The multitude will always be sacrificed to the few, and public interests to private interests. The specious names of justice and subordination will always serve as means of violence and arms to iniquity; whence it follows, that the higher orders, which pretend to be useful to those which are beneath them, are in truth useful only to themselves, and at the expense of the others.' He goes still farther in the *Social Contract*. The forms of government of the republics of antiquity are the models proposed to modern nations. Rousseau lays down in an absolute manner the principle of the sovereignty of the people, and that of the dependence of its chiefs. 'The sovereignty of the people is anterior to the institutions which regulate it, and these institutions are not obligatory till they have been established by the people's own choice. Thus the people choose the government which pleases them, and change it when they please.'

"The principle of the sovereignty of the people, laid down peremptorily, in the hearing of a vain, frivolous, and discontented nation, could not but seduce many. Every Frenchman, delighted to be sovereign, believed himself the master of the person who had so long boasted of being his ruler. This pleasant illusion made him overlook the fantastic ideas, the impracticable schemes, and the contradictions with which the work abounds. The *Social Contract* became the Gospel of the unfledged politicians who are so numerous in all the classes of society. The errors of this book have passed away and are forgotten; but the doctrines of equality and the sovereignty of the people have remained."

It is evident that the Count de Tocqueville takes a very

different view of the revolution that began in 1789 from that which has long been common among his countrymen. In his eyes, it was the inevitable and deplorable conclusion of a long course of national disaster and crime. It was a grand convulsion which engulfed alike the monarchy, the nobility, and the church,—the punishment which all had merited and brought upon themselves by persistence in licentiousness, frivolity, and impiety. The people of France were no longer proud of their government, they were even disgusted with it, and were strongly desirous of a change; but the ground of their discontent was not political oppression or religious persecution. They were themselves nearly as much demoralized as their rulers, and though weary of an inglorious despotism, they had no rational desire or conception of freedom. Accordingly, when the evils of the state had reached a crisis, and could no longer be endured, the people became frantic, and tore down the whole edifice of the constitution and the laws, without any distinct conception of what was to be erected in its place. The king, the nobles, and the clergy became alike the objects of their insane fury, which was restrained by no prudential regard for their own welfare, no idea of political principle, and no sense of religious obligation. They had no definite object in view, such as guided the efforts of the English patriots in the rebellion against Charles I., and in the revolution of 1688. The freedom which they vindicated for themselves, at the cost of so much blood and treasure, was gladly relinquished only fifteen years afterwards, when the people almost with one voice made Napoleon emperor with absolute power. Three and a half millions of votes were given in favor of this change, and only about twenty-five hundred were opposed to it. The remark of the historian is perfectly just, that there is no other example recorded in the annals of the world of so unanimous an approbation of the foundation of a dynasty, no instance of a nation so joyfully taking refuge in the stillness of despotism.